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*Trust Us, We're SOF?*

U.S. Special Operations Forces are Key to Building Partner Capacity in Indonesia.

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## **Abstract**

### *Trust Us, We're SOF?*

#### *U.S. Special Operations Forces are Key to Building Partner Capacity in Indonesia.*

Recent decisions by the Government of Indonesia (GOI) present a path for future engagement to build partner capacity with the Indonesian Military (TNI), with long-term strategic impact.<sup>1</sup> The reestablishment of the Indonesian Joint Special Operations Command (IJSOC) allows U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) the opportunity to assist in the building of this organization from the ground up as a professional and capable operational headquarters, able to conduct well planned and well executed joint SOF missions domestically, regionally, and internationally. Building Partner Capacity within IJSOC and Indonesian Special Operations Forces (ISOF) provides a buffer against Chinese influence in the region, supports regional stability through existing cooperative organizations, and offers the U.S. a skilled operational partner for the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Chan, "Jakarta Revives Joint Special Operations Command for War on Terror," *The Straits Times*, May 22, 2018, <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/jakarta-revives-joint-special-operations-command-for-war-on-terror>.

## Introduction

In “Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States”, Secretary of Defense James Mattis (SECDEF) outlines the priorities for the U.S. military. He directly addresses China and its efforts to militarize areas within the South China Sea. From his introduction, SECDEF clearly defines the changing security environment and China’s changing role in the increasingly complex geopolitical world.<sup>2</sup> The NDS defines three lines of effort, one of which is “strengthening alliances as we attract new partners.”<sup>3</sup> In support of this line of effort, the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) should more actively engage the Indonesian Military (TNI) as a strategic partner in the region through the Building Partner Capacity (BPC) construct.

Recent decisions by the GOI present a path for future engagement to build partner capacity with the TNI, with long-term strategic impact.<sup>4</sup> The reestablishment of the Indonesian Joint Special Operations Command (IJSOC) allows U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) the opportunity to assist in the building of this organization from the ground up as a professional and capable operational headquarters, able to conduct well planned and well executed joint SOF missions domestically, regionally, and internationally. Building Partner Capacity within IJSOC and Indonesian Special Operations Forces (ISOF) provides a buffer against Chinese influence in the region, supports regional stability through existing cooperative organizations, and offers the U.S. a skilled operational partner for the future.

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<sup>2</sup>Jim Mattis and Department of Defense, Washington United States, “Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America 2018”, 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>4</sup> Francis Chan, “Jakarta Revives JSOC.”

## Background

USINDOPACOM encompasses a vast area of responsibility (AOR). This paper references the “region” as the area within the Second Island Chain. The geographic position of the Second Island Chain in the Western Pacific establishes a common line of reference for Chinese intervention. It is located east of The Philippines and runs through the Philippine Sea. Although there are some variations, the Second Island Chain generally begins in Japan at Honshu Island, runs south/southeast through the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and The Federated States of Micronesia. The Chain then runs west/southwest through Maluku, and south to the northern tip of Australia.<sup>5</sup> Indonesia is an increasingly important actor in this region and a developing partner for U.S. engagement. Indonesia’s geographic position in the region, internationally valuable natural resources, growing economy, substantial military power, and young democratic government make the country and its citizens important to U.S. interests within the entire USINDOPACOM AOR. The archipelagic geography of Indonesia and the region result in a porous border environment that presents a significant security challenge, in which maligned actors can potentially move freely.

The geographic complexity and the overall geopolitical situation in the region lend itself to BPC through increased use of Security Force Assistance (SFA) and Foreign Internal Defense (FID) missions and funding. US SOF are accustomed to working in complex operational environments like these and have historically performed extensive SFA and FID missions. US SOF missions enhance country and regional security through direct engagement with partner nation SOF at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. Many of the Association of South

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<sup>5</sup> Erickson, Andrew S. and Joel Wuthnow. "Barriers, Springboards and Benchmarks: China Conceptualizes the Pacific "Island Chains"." *The China Quarterly* 225, (03, 2016), 7. <https://search-proquest-com.usnwc.idm.oclc.org/docview/1771014349?accountid=322>

East Asian Nations (ASEAN) nations use SOF within the region to address a wide range of threats. ISOF is engaged in this environment, participating in both bilateral and multilateral exercises and operations.<sup>6</sup> ISOF will greatly benefit from additional US SOF engagement to build IJSOC into a strategically savvy, operationally adept force.

All four Indonesian military services field a special operations force. The Indonesian national police force maintains a special operations/counter-terrorism capability, as well. ISOF is a capable and mature force, comprised of approximately 12,000 personnel, able to exercise the full spectrum of special operations missions.<sup>7</sup> The TNI sets the regional standard for counter-terrorism strategy and is better tactically equipped to address the various aspects of terrorism than other nations in the region.<sup>8</sup> Manning constraints within US SOF preclude persistent engagement by special operations units at each ISOF tactical element with the regularity necessary for professionalism at the operational level and higher. A small US SOF element, however, will help increase understanding of the operational environment. The initial contingent of US SOF will explore the relationships within Indonesian military and civilian authorities. Initial engagement with IJSOC can help to guide service and unit-level engagement to better inform U.S. decision makers where best to apply resources. A small initial US SOF footprint helps decision makers find a proper balance for US SOF involvement and illuminates the important role of scalable, multi-faceted, BPC.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Andrew White, "ASEAN Special Operations Forces", *Military Technology* 42, no. 2 (2018), 44.

<sup>7</sup> IHS Jane's, "Jane's Special Forces", *Jane's Special Forces* (2017), 87.

<sup>8</sup> Oliver Ward, "Indonesia Leads the Way in Counter-Terrorism" *ASEAN Today* January 11, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Harry R. Yarger, and Joint Special Operations University, (U. S.). *Building Partner Capacity*. (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: JSOU Press 2015), 104.

BPC is an essential part of U.S. strategy going forward to maintain a positive, competing world order.<sup>10</sup> It involves the partner nation, its populace, and its international partners in the development, amplification, and application of its elements of national power (force) to support the partner nation's citizens and positively contribute to international peace and stability.<sup>11</sup> It is multi-faceted and involves resources from both governmental and non-governmental players, aimed at engagement over time to enhance a partner nation's institutions and operational environment. BPC sets the conditions for sustained security through intermediate conditions which build toward focused, sustainable objectives. An inherently complex activity, BPC involves numerous activities at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. These activities vary in scale and number and may occur, singularly, in series or parallel. All activities focus on building capabilities into capacities and building capacities into long-term security and stability.<sup>12</sup>

The National Security Strategy of the United States (NSS) provides strategic level guidance to the decision makers within the United States Department of Defense (DOD) and the United States Department of State (DOS). The Secretary of State (SECSTATE) and SECDEF provide more detailed guidance through the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) and the NDS, respectively. At the DOS country-level, the Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) applies the JSP's guidance, with DOD input. The ICS for Indonesia lists Mission Goal 2 as "strengthen security," based on Indonesia's contributions to "regional and international peace and security through modern and professional defense and law enforcement agencies and engaged community support."<sup>13</sup> The ICS further states that "Indonesia's inadequate defense posture, management process, readiness,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., ix.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Integrated Country Strategy – Indonesia* (Washington, DC), 4.



and joint capabilities currently prevent it from more effectively cooperating with the U.S.”<sup>14</sup>

Improvement of these operational level elements by TNI will help realize an increased role in the future regional balance of power.

The ICS and NDS both show a clear indication of U.S. benefit from increased military to military engagement with Indonesia. Through this engagement, the military can meet the SECDEF’s vision of stronger alliances and partnerships that help deter aggression, provide mechanisms for action, and extend the U.S. network of capable partners.<sup>15</sup> The IJSOC is composed of a mature tactical-level force, but has yet to achieve its full potential to perform effective joint training and operations. Increased assistance from the U.S. will help Indonesia focus more strategically and operational, vice tactically.<sup>16</sup> US SOF is a small, low-cost/high-return approach to a strategic partner for the United States.

## **The Case for SOF**

### *Buffer Against Aggressive Regional Players*

Indonesia is a logical partner for the United States and plays a role in countering China as a commonly shared aggressor. The relationship between the U.S. and Indonesia is healthy. The countries share many institutional standards as two of the world’s largest democracies. The steadily growing economy and the increasingly stable government provide a secure foundation for further support from the United States.<sup>17</sup> Engaging with and continuing to professionalize

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>15</sup> Mattis, “Summary of 2018 NDS”, 8.

<sup>16</sup> James R. Campbell, “Transnational Security Threats to Indonesia.” *Issues for Engagement: Asian Perspectives on Transnational Security Challenges*, 53. <https://apcss.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/48-62-Transnational-Security-Threats.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Lindsay Hughes, “Indonesian Foreign Policy: The US Factor.” *Future Directions International* (06 September 2018), 1. <http://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/indonesian-foreign-policy-the-us-factor/>

ISOF will have lasting stabilization effects on the GOI and its institutions. Engagement, professionalism, and growth, however, take time. A long-term commitment by the United States makes balancing each country's desired end states more achievable. BPC, as a strategic concept, is a long-term commitment with strategic implications for both the partner nation and the U.S.<sup>18</sup> Applying the BPC construct provides the U.S. with an indirect approach to countering Chinese influence in the region.

An indirect approach to U.S. strategic goals leverages the mutual goals of a partner nation to reduce the need for large numbers of deployed U.S. forces or direct U.S. engagement. All US SOF participate in BPC doctrinally through SFA and FID, among other core SOF missions.<sup>19</sup> Successful use of SFA and FID are effective in establishing partner nation deterrent forces capable of countering both state and non-state hostile actors.<sup>20</sup> Direct BPC efforts through SFA and FID to professionalize and legitimize IJSOC and ISOF offer an opportunity for US SOF to assist in the development of a formal, operational level SOF headquarters, in a key Indo-Pacific nation.<sup>21</sup> Based on sustained efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and many countries around the world, US SOF has established itself as the subject matter experts in working by, with, and through partner nation forces. US SOF's ability to provide advice and training builds capability and capacity that is sustainable, transparent, within the rule of law, and increases the legitimacy of the partner nation's military.<sup>22</sup> Supporting the development of the IJSOC and ISOF capitalizes on a traditional SOF activity to provide effects within the deterrence arm of U.S. policy.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Yarger, *Building Partner Capacity*, 49-50.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Haddick and Joint Special Operations University, *How do SOF Contribute to Comprehensive Deterrence?* (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: The JSOU Press, 2017), 5.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. DOS, *Integrated Country Strategy – Indonesia*, 2.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command, *United States Special Operations Command 2020 (SOCOM 2020)* (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: U.S. Special Operation Command, 2013), 4.

<https://www.scribd.com/doc/259630856/SOCOM-2020-Strategy-Forging-the-Tip-of-the-Spear>

<sup>23</sup> Haddick, *How do SOF Contribute?*, 66.

Knowing that Indonesia has effective, well-trained, and professional operational-level SOF, able to secure the nation and assist in the region will force China, or any other antagonist, to reconsider aggressive action in the region.

ASEAN nations are increasing spending on SOF capabilities to counter uncertainty in the region.<sup>24</sup> Many members of regional coordinating organizations currently benefit or have benefitted from USSOCOM engagement and collaboration.<sup>25</sup> Engaging IJSOC and ISOF furthers the indirect U.S. approach to regional stability and supports Indonesian and U.S. strategic goals in the Indo-Pacific. US SOF sees future success and stability as more dependent on the indirect approach.<sup>26</sup> The indirect approach enables partner nations to build military self-sufficiency.<sup>27</sup> Indonesia has taken the lead with ASEAN on many occasions, and many regard Indonesia as a leader in the organization.<sup>28</sup> As Indonesia becomes increasingly bold with her assertion of her sovereignty in the region,<sup>29</sup> the professionalization of ISOF/IJSOC into an operational and strategic level actor indirectly expands U.S. influence, reach, and strategic position to counter China's effort to disrupt the global commons.

A strong partner in the region allows the U.S. access in the event of a manmade or natural contingency. In the *SOCOM 2020 Vision*, then-USSOCOM Commander, Admiral William McRaven asserts that the U.S. cannot address future challenges alone. Resource constraints, coupled with growing requirements, necessitate that US SOF build a global SOF network of like-minded partners within the defense and interagency communities. Proactive actions by these partners provide cost-effective mechanisms for advanced threat warning and support cooperative

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<sup>24</sup> White, "ASEAN SOF", 44.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>26</sup> Yarger, *Building Partner Capacity*, 83.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>28</sup> Anwar, "Indonesia's Vision of Regional Order", 63.

<sup>29</sup> "Asserting Sovereignty, Indonesia Renames Part of South China Sea." *Cyprus Mail*, (2017)

solutions across the full spectrum of operations. To build strong partnerships, US SOF must think differently and better understand a multi-faceted cultural and global context to strengthen trust through cooperation.<sup>30</sup> USSOCOM recognizes the strategic importance of partnerships, specifically in Indonesia, and aims to influence and enable them as a skilled partner for future security. U.S. Special Operations Command, Pacific (SOCPAC) identifies Indonesia as one of the areas of focus within South East Asia.<sup>31</sup> Engagement with Indonesia is needed, supported, and in the best interest of long-term U.S. strategy in the region.

### *Bolstering Regional Organizational Stability*

US SOF understands the strategic environment and is skilled at translating strategic imperatives to the operational level, working closely with our partners and allies, to achieve those goals and influence the environment.<sup>32</sup> To USSOCOM, the strategic and operational impacts of Building Partner Capacity are vital enough to realign forces to capitalize on Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) experience and increase overall US SOF capacity.<sup>33</sup> Through this force realignment, USSOCOM can assist IJSOC in translating the GOI's strategic vision into operational action. A solid operational plan is paramount to government and military stability and legitimacy in the region. Regional stability, through legitimized state actors and strong regional intergovernmental organizations, provides an environment under which all nations of the world can prosper.

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<sup>30</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command, *SOCOM 2020*, foreword.

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command, *United States Special Operations Command Fact Book 2019*, 40.  
[https://www.socom.mil/FactBook/USSOCOM%202019%20Fact%20Book\\_Web.pdf](https://www.socom.mil/FactBook/USSOCOM%202019%20Fact%20Book_Web.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Special Operation Command, *SOCOM 2020*, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Yarger, *Building Partner Capacity*, 103.

The reestablishment of the IJSOC is a bold move on behalf of the TNI, but a move also seen in other ASEAN member nations recently.<sup>34</sup> As other regional SOF continue to mature, Indonesia needs to keep pace to maintain a leadership position. IJSOC and ISOF can better contribute to both national and regional security and stability through better command and control (C2) of joint and eventually combined forces. This is an area where US SOF's extensive experience and lessons learned directly apply. A capable IJSOF command and control organization provides stability within TNI and the GOI. Stable TNI and GOI will further deter aggression, offer stability to the greater regional political, economic, and military climate, and increases Indonesia's ability to support other regional partners. Mature, operational level headquarters are necessary for effective C2.

Aggressive actions by China in the region puts stress on the stability between nations and within International Governmental Organizations (IGOs). The rise of China, struggles within U.S. politics, and issues in Europe necessitate a larger role for ASEAN as a counter to Chinese ambitions – as an equal partner, not just for the benefit of the member nations, but for the region.<sup>35</sup> Since the 1990's, Indonesian foreign policy has focused on cooperation in order to maintain peace and stability in the region. Members see ASEAN as a shield to the China threat while allowing relations with the West, including defense cooperation with the U.S.<sup>36</sup> From the first ASEAN summit in 1976, Indonesia and the other member States stressed that the strength of each country allows national and regional resilience. Close cooperation within ASEAN is paramount to regional stability, and preferred over looking toward a powerful external partner

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<sup>34</sup> White, "ASEAN SOF", 45.

<sup>35</sup> Andrew Tillet. "ASEAN 'Needs Bigger Global Role': Former Indonesia Minister." *The Australian Financial Review*, August 08, 2017.

<sup>36</sup> Anwar, *Indonesia's Vision of Regional Order*, 58.

for a security guarantee.<sup>37</sup> As ASEAN continues in this direction of increasing military coordination, with Indonesia leading and influencing, U.S. involvement in professionalizing and legitimizing the IJSOC and ISOF will only help bolster Indonesia's position within the organization. U.S. professionalization of TNI supports the ASEAN goal of individual members strengths without the U.S. acting as a foreign security guarantee. Relationships, partnerships, trust, and interdependence of military and other government agencies take time to build.<sup>38</sup> The sooner US SOF can more extensively and effectively engage in Indonesia, the quicker the U.S. can start expanding influence, security, and stability to meet our strategic goals as nested with those of Indonesia.

Regular sharing of information further enhances regional stability. Information sharing is a challenge in nearly every aspect of Joint/Combined operations. Not easily done, but imperative to success, information sharing is conducive to building open, honest, and trusting relationships with partner forces and between military and government agencies. A lack of information sharing within GOI makes the country more vulnerable to violent extremist organization (VEOs).<sup>39</sup> As recently as the 2018 Pacific Area Security Sector Working Group (PASSWG), hosted by SOCPAC, the countries in attendance identified information sharing as a key to an effective organization.<sup>40</sup> The region has a collaboration tool available via the All Partners Access Network (APAN).<sup>41</sup> If this proves to be insufficient for TNI requirements to protect their nation and help stabilize the region, the U.S. should sponsor the expansion of a shared network with capabilities similar to CENTRIX and BICES, which are successful in other regions.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>38</sup> Yarger, *Building Partner Capacity*, 93.

<sup>39</sup> U.S. DoS, *Integrated Country Strategy – Indonesia*, 8.

<sup>40</sup> Dr. Deon V Canyon et al., "Pacific Opportunities, U.S. Special Operations Forces Engage in Pacific Island Nations Through Security Working Group," *Indo-Pacific Defense Forum* 43, Issue 2 (2018): 47.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 51.

Support to this effort offers benefits beyond just providing information to Indonesia and other regional partners. The U.S. and our allies stand to gain access to information previously unavailable. This information can be processed and analyzed by partner nations within the cooperative regional organization. It can be made available for hard or soft action by our regional partners; or acted upon by US SOF, already positioned in the region.

### *Future Strategic Partner*

Regional actors take a protracted approach to countering U.S. interests in the area. China and violent extremist organizations have time on their side to influence populations, change ideology, and create conditions where populations challenge their governments. An indirect approach by the U.S. is an appropriate strategic response and will help to build a long-term strategic partnership between the U.S. and Indonesia. To achieve this, US SOF must build senior level relationships and deep cultural understanding to act as strategic multipliers for national security.<sup>42</sup> This approach is more affordable (acceptable) for the host nation, applicable for their needs, and fits within the construct of their organizations.<sup>43</sup> Beginning with IJSOC and ISOF allows USINDOPACOM a small-scale increase in SFA and FID. US SOF engagement is scalable or cancelable if the operational environment changes and necessitates a different approach.

The current approach to supporting ISOF is insufficient. Known as Military Liaison Elements (MLEs) or PACOM Augmentation Teams (PATs), the billets and personnel for these teams come from existing SOCPAC structure. SOCPAC supports approximately 12 MLEs/PATs of various sizes throughout the AOR. Although PAT-Indonesia has one of the

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<sup>42</sup> Ellis, *Thinking Dangerously*, 119

<sup>43</sup> Yarger, *Building Partner Capacity*, 59.

largest teams – a four-man core element and a four-man Civil Affairs (CA) and Military Information Support Team (MIST) - the leadership of the PAT is at the O3 level, vice the O5/O6 level where it was just a few years ago. The PAT must deal with a myriad of administrative challenges from both the U.S. Embassy and the GOI.<sup>44</sup> Although our junior officers are highly astute and capable, their experience during 17 years of combat operations focused direct-action missions. To truly and effectively build partner capacity, US SOF must leverage senior personnel with previous experience in the indirect approach to ensure mission success.

Key leader engagements at the flag officer and general officer level are required to strengthen the partnership further and maintain senior leadership involvement and support from the IJSOC, ISOF, and TNI.

USSOCOM has been undergoing a war-gaming and analysis-supported process to properly resource and support the TSOCs to better meet GCC requirements.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, USSOCOM has been expanding their Special Operations Liaison Officer (SOLO) program. SOLOs work at the embassy level, acting as the SOCOM representative and SOF advisor for the specified country. They are trained to build relationships, synchronize operations, and coordinate interagency support within the host nation and the U.S. Country Team.<sup>46</sup> Only Japan and Australia currently have SOLO's assigned in the region.<sup>47</sup> Based on the strategic importance of IJSOC and ISOF, presented above, a SOLO for Indonesia is warranted. Engagement at this level will help bring a whole of government approach to the development of an operational level

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<sup>44</sup> LTC Hilton B. Gardner, email message to author, 22 October 2018. LTC Gardner is a former SOCPAC J3/J5 staff officer.

<sup>45</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command, *SOCOM 2020*, 5.

<sup>46</sup> Yarger, *Building Partner Capacity*, 84.

<sup>47</sup> LTC Hilton B. Gardner, email message to author, 22 October 2018. LTC Gardner is a former SOCPAC J3/J5 staff officer.



capacity to IJSOC and stress the importance of interagency coordination for operational and strategic level success.

A professionalized ISOF allows USSOCOM to expand their global SOF network, a Line of Operation (LOO) in the *SOCOM 2020* vision which actively supports the country team and Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) goals and plans in alignment with the NDS.<sup>48</sup> US SOF can ensure alignment with interagency partners through forward-based, persistent presence, closely integrated with our ISOF partners to protect our interests and provide rapid response to a host of contingencies.<sup>49</sup> This persistent presence may seem at odds with the manpower shortfalls previously mentioned, but USSOCOM's force optimization and realigned is aimed at just these types of missions. Increasingly more important in the modern geopolitical landscape, the United States and our partner nations must build trust over time, it cannot be surged when a crisis arises.<sup>50</sup> USINDOPACOM, USSOCOM, and SOCPAC must make a long-term, sustained commitment to IJSOC, ISOF, TNI and the whole of the Indonesia government to advance shared interests in the region and support security and stability for Indonesia and other regional partners into the future.

### Counter-Arguments

Previous human rights abuses by ISOF have been well publicized, causing critics to argue against the U.S. building partner capacity in Indonesia.<sup>51</sup> However, SECDEF has engaged in discussions just this year regarding improving military cooperation with ISOF.<sup>52</sup> Mattis

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<sup>48</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command, *SOCOM 2020*, 7.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>51</sup> "United States/Indonesia: The US should Not be Rehabilitating Indonesia's Abusive Special Forces." *Asia News Monitor*, (2018d).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

acknowledges past abuses by potential partners and reaffirmed that the U.S. will continue to comply with the Leahy Law, which prevents the U.S. from training military units until the partner nation addresses questions on human rights.<sup>53</sup> A complex process which involves U.S. embassies, U.S. DOS and other government organizations, Leahy vetting determines the individuals and units of a partner nation eligible to receive assistance and training from the DOD and other U.S. government organizations.<sup>54</sup> The U.S. military and the whole of the U.S. government does not take these accusations lightly, canceling FID and SFA missions and removing personnel from training based on the vetting process. The American people should have confidence that the U.S. and its military personnel will continue to perform due diligence regarding human rights issues.

The GOI continues to improve the acknowledgment and addressing of past abuses. During a periodic review by the United Nations of Indonesia's human rights record in 2017, Indonesia committed to reform the military tribunal system, including reforms to the military criminal code.<sup>55</sup> Strengthening military to military relationships, building trust, and establishing a partnership with IJSOC provides US SOF with the ability to affect, train, and influence current and future ISOF personnel on the proper military respect for human rights. Growth in the "duty-to-inform" provision of the Leahy Laws to include U.S. DOD will foster further cooperation with partner nation governments and law enforcement, and reinforce that U.S. assistance is only available to nations which comply with internationally accepted human rights standards. Any

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Nina M. Serafino, et al., "'Leahy Law' Human Rights Provisions and Security Assistance: Issue Overview." Congressional Research Service, R43361. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014, Summary. <https://fas.org/sfp/crs/row/R43361.pdf#page=15>

<sup>55</sup> "Indonesia: New Military Chief Should Tackle Abuses." *Asia News Monitor*, (2018)

security force assistance package should include assistance to partner nations in the investigation and prosecution of suspected abuses.<sup>56</sup>

US SOF has been stretched nearly to the breaking point during the GWOT. Many will argue that due to ongoing operations throughout every GCC, SOF should not be asked to do more. USSOCOM disagrees, and with the *SOCOM 2020* posture statement began to realign forces to support the Combatant Commands (CCMDs) better.<sup>57</sup> This realignment will allow BPC via a return to core missions of SFA and FID, expansion of the SOLO program, and realigning forces to support the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC).<sup>58</sup> Policymakers and strategic planners must apply the critical SOF competencies, skills, capabilities, and relationships as part of the overall deterrence strategy,<sup>59</sup> and USSOCOM's efforts to provide trained forces for this are postured to provide strategic effects.

The *SOCOM 2020* realignment initiative appears to focus on the active duty component. Additional US SOF capability and capacity reside in both the Reserve and National Guard Special Operations Forces. Arguably more suited to the types of missions required in Indonesia, Reserve and National Guard personnel bring maturity, experience in and out of uniform, and time in service as force multipliers to Building Partner Capacity missions. In addition to SOF skills, many Reserve and National Guard personnel have government, law enforcement, administrative, legislative, and other soft skills which can be leveraged to provide increased legitimacy when working IJSOC and ISOF. If anything, USSOCOM has yet to realize the full

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<sup>56</sup> Serafino, "Leahy Law and Human Rights Provisions," 12.

<sup>57</sup> Jordana Mishory, "SOCOM Finalizing Campaign Plan on how to Best Resource COCOMs." *Inside the Army* 25, no. 31 (2013): 17.

<sup>58</sup> Troy White, and Joint Special Operations University, *Growing SOLO: Expanding the Spectrum of SOF Advisory Capabilities* (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: The JSOU Press 2018), 48.

<sup>59</sup> Haddick, *How Do SOF Contribute?*, 4

potential of the total Force in expanding BPC, SFA, and FID support to important partner nations like Indonesia.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The strategic guidance from U.S. policymakers makes it clear that the focus of the U.S. Department of Defense is shifting. Closely coupled with that focus will be our increased interdependence on key partner nations in regions of interest around the world. All levels of government have been actively addressing the increased interest in USINDOPACOM over the last two administrations. Indonesia is as a key partner in the INDOPACOM AOR. With a strong military and a stable but young democracy, USINDOPACOM should continue to increase military to military relations with Indonesia, specifically at the operational, inter-agency and ministerial levels.

Concurrent with a shift of U.S. DOD focus, USSOCOM has also been analyzing their activities over the last 17 years and posturing for the best application of resources for future engagement, with a focus on strategic effects. US SOF has always been flexible and shown an ability to adjust to whatever DOD needs with focus, dedication, and unparalleled mission completion. The *SOCOM 2020* vision supports the Integrated Country Strategy for Indonesia and the National Defense Strategy. The Vision's specific lines of effort synch with USINDOPACOM goals and plans for more valuable engagement with Indonesia to buffer Chinese influence in the region. Further, Building Partner Capacity within IJSOC and ISOF will increase Indonesia's leadership and influence in existing, cooperative, regional organizations, and offers the U.S. a partner for further future engagement and strategic influence.

The balancing of limited resources is never simple. Building Partner Capacity is neither easy nor fast, even if dedicated and essentially unlimited resources were available.

USINDOPACOM must exercise operational and strategic patience to grow and mature IJSOC/ISOF capacity, capability, and operational effectiveness. The GCC and TSOC need to work closely to prioritize assets already available in the theater. A better model for US SOF engagement in Indonesia is the assignment of teams at multiple locations – the U.S. Embassy, Indonesian ministries, IJSOC, and the ISOF service-level commands. This model creates a command, control, and coordination challenge which can be managed in-country by a senior officer. On behalf of USINDOPACOM, SOCPAC can work to leverage additional resources – in the form of small teams like SOLOs, PATs, additional SFA and FID funding, a potential Regional SOF Coordination Center (RSCC), or Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEEs). USSOCOM needs to provide personnel and resources to SOCPAC to expand and maintain these instrumental BPC teams.

This paper addressed the idea of increasing military to military engagement with Indonesia - with US SOF in the lead - as a buffer to China and an enhancement to regional security. Bringing the idea to the forefront of USINDOPACOM and SOCPAC planning fosters detailed discussions and specific mechanisms for execution. Additional research will determine how best to address BPC, SFA, and FID within an operational construct that is specific for Indonesia. Numerous academic works are available to demonstrate how DOD and US SOF have done BPA well, while openly and honestly addressing the shortfalls of those missions and applying lessons learned to support in Indonesia.

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